

Commission News

www.mswcc.ms.gov

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Teachers attend Desoto Co. workshop

DESOTO CO. – Twenty-five teachers participated in a four-day hands-on teacher workshop at Desoto Central Middle School July 9-12.

Rob Winkler demonstrated geocaching, using a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and navigation techniques to hide and seek “caches,” specific locations marked by coordinates.

Natalie Bright, program director for Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation Coldwater River Nature Conservancy, discussed the conservancy’s mission to protect the environment through conservation and education.

Itawamba Co. SWCD Clerk Polly Tutor discussed the Farm-to-Table program, which helps bring fresh produce directly to consumers.

Courtney Goode, MDOT talked about “Don’t Trash Mississippi,” MDOT’s Anti-Litter program.

Tympel Harrison, Mississippi Forestry Commission Outreach Officer, Region I, demonstrated forestry tools.

Desoto Co. SWCD Clerk Meleiah Tyus presented *Soil Babies*.

John Defazio, Wildlife Biologist, USDA, NRCS discussed tracks and signs, and how to recognize clues left by wildlife.

Tim Burrell, *That Gardenin’ Guy*,

discussed varieties of plants with *What’s Growing in Your Garden*.

Cherie, Ron and Joseph Schadler of Bayou Town Productions put on a puppet show for the Environmental Education & Outreach Classroom.

Keith Head, MDEQ Air Quality Planning and Standards discussed measures MDEQ takes to monitor air quality and pollution to meet EPA standards.

Robin Tisdale, MSWCC Field Rep, presented the Soil Tunnel, an inflatable walk-through tunnel used to explore the world under the tree roots.

Chelsey Gazaway, MSWCC Senior Educational Specialist, informed teachers about activities and events conducted by MSWCC, such as Envirothon, Youth Camp, poster and essay contests, and scholarships.

She discussed activities held by local SWCD’s, such as conservation carnivals, field days and workshops, and demonstrated activities for the classroom or field day, such as “Don’t Use It All Up!”, an activity about water conservation; the Incredible Journey



Teachers learn to paint with soil at a workshop session.
PHOTO BY MELEIAH TYUS, DESOTO CO. SWCD

game; and soil painting, a hands-on NACD activity to create artwork using soil as paint.

Deb Veeder of MFW presented an Adopt-A-Stream workshop.

George Rowland, of North-Central Mississippi RC&D Council, served as moderator for the workshop, sponsored by North Area RC&D with assistance from Desoto Co. SWCD, and funded by MDEQ.

NACD: Farm Bill passes House, Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On June 28, the U.S. SENATE passed its version of the next farm bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. “With the Senate’s passage, Congress is nearing towards the final steps to reauthorize the farm bill,” NACD President Brent Van Dyke said. “I applaud Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow for

their bipartisanship commitment throughout this process. NACD stands ready to work with both chambers to create a final product with the best parts of each chamber’s bill to advance locally-led conservation.”

On June 21, the U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES passed the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2).

“Today’s passage marks another crucial step in getting a farm bill delivered on time,” Van Dyke said.

“We applaud Chairman Conaway and members of the Ag Committee on navigating this bill through the House, and we look forward to working with both the House and Senate in a bipartisan fashion to advance locally-led conservation.”

Banks joins MSWCC administrative staff

SANDRA WELLS BANKS joined the MSWCC administrative staff in June 2018 as an Accounting/Auditor Professional I.

Ms. Banks brings more than 20 years of experience in public accounting and 4-1/2 years of experience in governmental accounting to the Commission.

Before joining MSWCC, she worked as an Accountant/Auditor III for the MS Development Au-

thority, an Accountant/Auditor II for the MS Department of Rehabilitation Services, and an Accounting/Auditing Tech for the MS Department of Health-Public Lab.

She earned her bachelor of arts degree in Accounting from Jackson State University in 2016 and



SANDRA BANKS

will complete her master's degree in Professional Accountancy in December from JSU.

Ms. Banks has two children, Derwin and Shayla Banks; one granddaughter, Addyson Banks; and a grandson on the way in September.

Please join us in welcoming Sandra Banks.

MCDEA conference held in heart of the Delta

CLEVELAND, MS – The 2018 annual conference of the Mississippi Conservation District Employees Association was held June 26-28 in the MS Delta, and included seminars, workshops and networking.

Presenters included Kevin Nelms, NRCS black bear expert and Mark River of Quapaw Canoe Company; MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert, Chelsey Gazaway and Robin Tisdale of MSWCC; Taylor Pang of NRCS, a former Youth Camp scholarship winner, Jeanne Miller of Delta Area Envirothon, MACD President Pete Hunter, and Natalie Segrest, MDEQ.

On June 27, 60 people visited McCarty's Pottery in Merigold.

On Thursday, June 28, attendees participated in a leaf activity with



MCDEA conference attendees gather for a photo in front of Crawdad's in Merigold, MS, on June 27, 2018. Photo provided by Erica Fortenberry.

Ashley Kerr, Bolivar Co., 4H MSU Extension Service, learned about SWCD funding opportunities from

Natalie Segrest, MDEQ, and visited the Grammy Museum in Cleveland.

Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Mark E. Gilbert, CPM, Executive Director

Buddy Allen
Chairman
Tunica, MS

Pete Hunter
Vice Chairman
Clarksdale, MS

Herman Dungan Jr.
Prentiss, MS

Jerry Smith
Philadelphia, MS

Gary Blair
Brookhaven, MS

Anita Cowan
Lamar, MS

Paul Myrick
Stringer, MS

Nick Elmore
Lucedale, MS

Pat Ragsdale
Walnut, MS

Charlie W. Morgan
State Forester
Jackson, MS

Andy Gipson
Commissioner of Agriculture
Jackson, MS

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Dr. Gary Jackson
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MACD summer meetings take place for Central, Delta, North and South areas

CENTRAL AREA

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

KOSCIUSKO – More than 100 people attended the MACD Central Area summer meeting on Tuesday, June 12, 2018, at the Holmes Community College Branch in Kosciusko. The meeting included a partnership report from Erica Fortenberry, MCDEA Area Vice President. Mark Gilbert, Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission Executive Director, gave updates on MSWCC activities. Clarence Finley, Assistant State Conservationist, NRCS, emphasized that “incentives are conservation on the ground,” and that



MACD President Pete Hunter, who spoke at all four area meetings, lets his hair down at the Central Area meeting.

NRCS never forgets the farmers.

Pete Hunter, President, Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, Inc., provided updates on MACD.

Speakers included Andy Gibson, the MS Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, and Perry Parker, a cattle farmer. Don Underwood conducted commissioner training.

Central Area contest winners included:



Essay Contest winner Kawn Dixon, grades 9-10 category, receives his award from Pete Hunter.

Poster Contest Winners: Ty Latham, Lowndes Co., special education; Campbell Davis, Lowndes Co., grades 2-3; Kaymond Gibson, Leake Co., grades 4-6; and Lauren Adams, Lowndes Co., grades 10-12.

Essay Contest

Winners: Layne Kennedy, Madison Co., grades 7-8; Kawn Dixon II, Noxubee Co., grades 9-10; and Kennedy Leigh Hanna, Simpson Co., grades 11-12. NRCS presented Earth Team Awards.



Commissioner Nell Hughes accepts an award for a Simpson Co. contest winner from Pete Hunter.

MEETINGS CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



J.J. Smith, at right, receives the Outstanding NRCS Employee of the Year award from Pete Hunter.



Pete Hunter, left, presents the Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award to Halltree Inc of Lauderdale Co.

PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC



Left to right: Displaying the NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Program award are Claiborne Co. District Conservationist Bill Russell, Smith Co. District Clerk Debbie Smith, District Commissioner Gary King and Central Area District Commissioner of the Year Jim Overby.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 3-5, 2018

Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza, MS Trade Mart, Jackson, 601.605.1790; mstarnes@mswf.org, www.mswildlife.org

AUGUST 3-9, 2018

2018 NACD Summer meeting, Williamsburg, VA Ph. 757-220-7976

OCTOBER 27, 2018

Great Delta Bear Affair, Rolling Fork, www.greatdeltabearaffair.org

DELTA AREA

CLEVELAND — The Delta Area summer meeting was held at the Grammy Museum in Cleveland, where approximately 100 people toured the museum and attended the evening meeting afterward on June 14, 2018.

State Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson spoke at the meeting, with updates provided by: Pete Hunter, MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert spoke at all four 2018 area summer meetings. PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

MACD President; Mark Gilbert, MSWCC Executive Director; Kevin Kennedy, Area Conservationist, NRCS; Jason Blaylock, NRCS Area Resource Conservationist and Ellen Davis of MCDEA. Don Underwood conducted commissioners' training.

Delta Area contest winners included:

Poster Contest Winners: Braylen Ladner, Yazoo Co., grades K-1; Katelyn Greer, Yazoo Co., grades 2-3; Britton Staples, LeFlore Co., grades 4-6; Katie Sherard, Coahoma Co., grades 7-9; and Kyriam Molina, Coahoma Co., grades 10-12.

Essay Contest Winners: Troy Goston Jr., Yazoo Co., grades 7-8; and Reid Bain, Yazoo Co., grades 9-10. NRCS presented Earth Team Awards.

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PHOTOS BY ROBIN TISDALE, MSWCC



Representatives from Old Rivers Farm of MS, LLC, accept award for Wildlife Conservationist of the Year from Pete Hunter, at right.



Commissioner John McKee, at left, accepts the Commissioner of the Year award from MACD President Pete Hunter.



Ellen Davis accepts the District Clerk of the Year award from Pete Hunter.



Rocco Morris accepts the Cropland Conservationist of the Year award from Pete Hunter.



Poster Contest winner, grades K-1, Braylen Ladner accepts award from Pete Hunter.



Poster Contest winner, grades 11-12, Kyriam Molina accepts award from Pete Hunter.



Poster Contest winner Britton Staples, grades 4-6, accepts award from Pete Hunter



Essay Contest winner grades 7-8, Troy Goston Jr., accepts award from Pete Hunter.

MEETINGS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

SOUTH AREA

COLUMBIA — The Community Room at Marion County Business Plex was the location for the South Area summer meeting on Tuesday, June 19, 2018, with more than 200 in attendance.

Hosted by the Marion County SWCD, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Marion Jordan, Marion Co. Little Miss Hospitality, with Daniel Watts, All State Honor Choir, singing an acapella version of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

South Area contest winners included:

Poster Contest Winners: Quinn Burns, grade 2, and Olivia Claire Couvillon, grade 4.

Essay Contest Winner: Everett Mason Jr., grade 7.

NRCS also presented Earth Team Awards.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, Andy Gipson, was keynote speaker at the meeting. He talked about a new program and website, Genuine MS, which launched July 11. The site promotes products raised, grazed, crafted and grown in Mississippi.

"This state-wide initiative creates a brand for Mississippi products and con-

nects consumers across the globe with our products. Genuine MS serves as an economic development tool to promote the products grown, raised, crafted and made right here in Mississippi," Gipson said.

Reports were presented by MACD President Pete Hunter; MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert; and MARCDC President Martha Watts. Don Underwood conducted commissioner training.

Following the awards presentation and luncheon, there was a tour of Helanbac, LLC and St. James Lighting.

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PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC



At the MACD South Area Summer meeting on June 19, 2018, Ag & Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson announced the Genuine MS program. He is shown displaying the link on his cell phone.

For more information about the MDAC's Genuine MS program, please visit www.genuineMS.com



Outstanding District Employee of the Year Lisa Brown accepts award from Pete Hunter.



Outstanding NRCS Employee of the Year Jamie Keith receives award from Pete Hunter.

MS Wildlife Extravaganza set for Aug. 3-5

The 32nd Annual Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza will take place at the MS Trade Mart in Jackson from 2-8 PM Fri., Aug. 3; 9 AM-7PM Sat., Aug. 4; and 10 AM-5 PM Sun., Aug. 5.

For more information, contact MS Wildlife Federation at 601.605.1790; mstarnes@mswf.org, or www.mswildlife.org.



Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, at left, with Jack Winstead with the Department of Agriculture, center, and Michael Carr, Acting State Conservationist, NRCS.



Essay Contest Winner, grades 7-8, Everett Mason Jr. receives award from MACD President Pete Hunter.

NORTH AREA

(MEETINGS continued from page 5)

PITTSBORO — Approximately 100 people were in attendance at the North Area summer meeting on Thursday, June 21, 2018, at the MS Cooperative Extension Service building in Pittsboro.

Calhoun Co. Chairman Randy Baker offered the invocation and welcome, and Area Vice President Faye Burrell led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed guests to the meeting.

MCDEA Vice President Meleiah Tyus gave the MCDEA report. Other reports included: MACD President Pete Hunter; MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert; and Kevin Kennedy, NRCS.



Area Conservationist Kevin Kennedy, NRCS, spoke at the North Area meeting.

Natalie Segrest, the Chief of Basin Management and Nonpoint Source for MDEQ, was the guest speaker. Don Underwood conducted commissioner training, and Faye Burrell and Pete Hunter presented awards.

North Area contest winners included:

Poster Contest Winners: Makayla Toliver, grades K-1, Tate Co.; Baiden Baker, grades 2-3, Chickasaw Co.; Jaidah Gary, grades 4-6, Webster Co.; Morgan Nosef, grades 7-9, Tate Co.; Spencer Newman, grades 10-12, Grenada Co.; and Zaquawn Brown, Spec. Ed., Chickasaw Co.

Essay Contest Winners: Abby Branch, grades 7-8, Desoto Co.; Spencer Newman, grades 9-10, Grenada Co.; and Natalie Brock, grades 11-12, Tate Co.

NRCS presented Earth Team Awards.



Pete Hunter, right, presents the North Area District Employee of the Year award to Sandra Dixon.



Pete Hunter, right, presents the North Area Outstanding Conservation Technician Award to Phillip Bishop.



MACD President Pete Hunter, left, presents the Livestock Environmental Award of the Year to Ben Ingram.



Daniel Coggin, right, receives the award for Commissioner of the Year from Pete Hunter.



MSWCC Field Rep Lee Smith, right, receives the Vice President's Award from North Area Vice President Faye Burrell.



Natalie Brock, right, receives her award for winning the grades 11-12 Essay Contest from Pete Hunter.



Abby Branch, right, grades 7-8 Essay Contest winner, receives her award from Pete Hunter.



Pete Hunter, left, presents Jaidah Gary the grades 4-6 Poster Contest winner, with her award.